THE EYE:

BY OBADIAH OPTIC.

——VARIOUS OBJECTS FROM THE SENSE,
VARIOUSLY REPRESENTING. MILTON.

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ORIGINAL.

THE EXPATIATOR.—No. VIII.

Or, meteor-like, flame lawless thro' the void,
Destroying others, by himself destroy'd. POPE.

WHILST I was ruminating on the progress of those fashionable vices, which are a disgrace to society, a loud rap at the door broke the chain of my meditations—a messenger entered and presented the following letter:—

TO THE EXPATIATOR.

SIR,

As many elaborate essays have been written, both by ancient and modern sages, relative to the progress of refinement, I shall therefore take the liberty of communicating *my* observations on this hackneyed subject. My experience is such as to render all speculations useless, for I have ever been a sincere votary of pleasure, and devoutly sacrificed at the popular shrine, with unwearied devotion.

Our ancestors were mere novices—they knew but the rudiments of the grand arts of sensuality—but, as the light of reason has brightened, our knowledge has matured and the present age can boast of bucks of the first blood—every accomplishment has been improved, and the students in refinement are now so numerous, and dissipation is so predominant, that the musty moralist may lay aside his pen and doubt his narrow judgment, or be laughed out of countenance for his precision:—Even divinity, which once held a distinguished station, must now give place, in our fashionable circles, to systems more congenial with the natural prospensities of men—

Blessed dawn of truth, before which the dark clouds of superstition evanish! The sun of pleasure now emanates from a clear sky!—I speak with boldness, for I know much of the world; and, as a recent adventure, in which I bore a conspicuous part, may prove to you our superiority to those who have preceded, I will give a brief sketch of it.

My promise to you of correspondence, I presume is still in your remembrance; believe me, sir, the full tide of gratification is the element in which I have ever since been—and no adverse breeze has driven me on the shoals of serious reflection. The evening after I saw you, was propitious to my wishes; a dear friend, whom I held in the highest estimation for his liberality and courage, lost at play with me, six thousand dollars!—My friend was no miser—gold was not his idol—but Fortune is a squinting hag, for whilst her face was turned to him, her complacent eye beamed benevolence on me: Previously to this, my purse was lighter than my spirits—favoured by chance, I attained the means of pleasure.—

Now, Joy her gayest chaplet wears,
And Mirth attunes her wanton lyre.

But, in the true spirit of a thoroughgoing blade, my dear friend resolved—and you must know sir, gentlemen of our character do not resolve and *re-resolve*—I say he resolved, and in the execution of his purpose, extinguished the lamp of his existence—

" Then burst the cordage of a noble soul!
Good night sweet *friend*!"

Should I weep for his loss?—rather would I emblazon this heroic act.—True, his widow " Like Niobe, all tears," together with a few shoots from this noble stock, moistened his grave and mingled with the passing breeze their mournful sighs—but what then, is a man to be diverted from his purpose lest he should cause a woman to dissolve with grief or because his children may cry?—where would be his glorious independence of soul, if such wind and water trifles were to gain the ascendency over his mind?—My friend left this scene of action in a manner honourable to his professional character, and has set his companions an example for emulation. Doubtless you will condemn his conduct, and execrate me for such an exulting manner:—But what is life but a prison, if we may not quit it when we please?—and at what time has a man a

better disposition to do this, than when his means of pleasure are no more?—I know your cant—you will perhaps speak of an *hereafter*—what is that to us?—we bucks live by chance—we die by chance, and may we not commit our destiny to chance?—or shall we, by restricting ourselves with respect to present enjoyments, be miserable here, merely that we may live in hopes of obtaining felicity in an unknown world?—Be assured, sir, futurity has no place in my thoughts.—Well, I think I hear you say, 'Go on young man, riot in thy pleasures; but know, for all these things thou shalt surely be brought to judgment!'—you will tell me, no doubt, the widow's sighs and orphan's tears shall be "swift witnesses" against me!—and why? has not *chance* been the umpire?—I was fortunate—the fickle goddess frowned on my friend, and he availed himself of nature's privilege;—if those he has left behind be unhappy, it is not his fault; he lost the means to make them otherwise, therefore it was right he should withdraw from their sorrows.—I anticipate your reply—Industry would have procured him the means of supplying their necessities, whilst habitual rectitude would have rendered life pleasant.—These things we gentlemen of refinement hold in abhorrence—what, shall we who pass our days amidst scenes of gaiety, whose souls swell in unison with the mirth-inspiring notes of the syren pleasure—shall we degrade ourselves to a level with plodding tradesmen?—Every feeling of a man of spirit revolts at the suggestion—banish the idea—it is too gross for a mind unshackled by the chains of morality.—You will ask me, Does not remorse sometimes force an entrance to my soul?—I answer, a remedy is ever at hand—the sparkling glass, the flowing bowl, like Lethean streams, drown all my griefs, whilst the tempest of convivality drives care to oblivion, and lest it should now intrude on my enjoyments, I shall take advantage of the rising gale, and bid you adieu!

Your's, JACK JOVIAL.

It would be needless to comment on the above, the reader may easily conceive of the dissipated character of the writer; he is not a solitary instance of human nature degraded:—If we cast our eyes over the world—alas! we find too much cause to weep for the depravity of mankind, disguised under the specious garb of refinement.—*Jovial* has given but a profile of the deformed character, yet he has exhibited to view a picture, which I trust will have but few admirers. O.

SELECTED.

AN ORIENTAL FABLE.

TIME the devourer of all things, has permitted me to be the spectator of a long series of events. The colour of my locks is now changed to that of the swans, which sport in the gardens of the mighty kings of the earth. Age and experience have taught me to believe, that the sovereign Disposer of our destinies has given to man a heart susceptible of virtue, and a soul capable of tasting the pleasures which arise from doing good. A noble and disinterested action must, somewhere, meet with its reward. Listen, O! sons of Adam, listen to my faithful tale!

In one of those delightful vallies, which cut the chain of the mountains in Arabia, for a long time lived a rich pastor. He was happy, because he was content, and his happiness consisted in doing good. One day, as he was walking on the enamelled borders of a torrent, under the shade of a grove of palm trees, which extended their verdant branches even to the heads of the lofty cedars, with which the top of the mountain was crowned, he heard a voice which frequently echoed into the valley the most piercing cries, and sometimes low murmuring plaints, which were lost in the noise of the torrent.

The venerable pastor hastened to the place from whence the voice proceeded; he saw a young man, prostrate on the sand at the foot of a rock; his garments were torn, and his hair in wild confusion covered his face, on which were easily to be traced the flowers of beauty faded by grief. Tears trickled down his cheeks, and his head was sunk on his bosom; he appeared like the rose, which the rude blasts of a storm had levelled to the earth. The pastor was touched at the sight. He approached the youth, and said to him, "O child of grief, hasten to my arms! let me press to my bosom the offspring of despair!"

The youth lifted up his head in mournful silence. With astonishment he fixed his eyes on the pastor; for he supposed no human being was capable of feeling for his sufferings. The sight of so venerable a figure inspired him with confidence, and he perceived in his eyes the tear of pity, and the fire of generosity. If to a generous soul it is pleasure to complain, and unfold the close secrets of the heart, that pleasure surely must be heightened, when we complain to those, who

will not shut their ear to the voice of truth, but will weigh every thing in the scale of reason, even though those truths may be disagreable, and such as they wish to have no existence.

The youth rose up, covered with dust, and as he flew to the arms of the pastor, uttered cries, which the neighbouring mountains trebly echoed. "O my father! (said he) O my father!" when he had a little recovered himself, after the tender embraces and the wise counsels of the old man, who asked him many questions.

"It is (continued the unfortunate youth) behind those lofty cedars, which you behold on those high mountains, it is there dwells Shel-Adar, the father of Fatima. The abode of my father is not far distant from thence. Fatima is the most beautiful damsel among all those of the mountains. I offered my service to Shel-Adar, to conduct one particular part of his flock, and he accepted my service. The father of Fatima is rich, mine is poor. I fell in love with Fatima, Fatima fell in love with me. Her father perceived it, and I was ordered to retire from that quarter in which lived the beautiful Fatima. I besought Shel-Adar in the most suppliant terms to permit me to attend his most distant flocks, where I could have no opportunity of addressing the object of my heart. My intreaties were in vain, and I was commanded instantly to retire. My mother indeed is no more; but I have an aged father, and two brothers so young, that they can hardly reach the most humble of the palm-tree branches. They have long depended on me for support; that support is now at an end. Let me die, hoary-headed Sire, and put an end to my woes."

The beneficent pastor conducted the youth to his own habitation, and the next morning, after having caused him to bathe in the waters of comfort, conducted him to the valley of Shel-Adar. They were followed by a herd of sheep, whiter than the summit of the highest mountain when covered by the winter's snow, and a number of horses more beautiful and nimble than that on which rode the prophet Mahomet.

The pastor approached Shel-Adar, and thus spoke to him: "A dove from Aleppo took refuge at Damas, and lived with a dove of that country; the master feared that the dove from Aleppo would one day entice away her companion, and therefore caused them to be separated. They would eat no grain but that which they received when together. They languished, they died. O Shel-Adar, separate not those who cannot live, unless they live together!"

Shel-Adar listened with attention to the words of the pastor, and, when he understood that the flock and the horses he had brought with him were now given to the bewailing youth, he took Fatima by the hand, and led her to the arms of her lover. They retired to the neighbouring grove, where the swains from the mountains assembled around them, crowned them with garlands, and in circles tripped over the enamelled grass to the sweet notes of the lute.

The day had passed too swiftly, when the twinkling stars appearing in the heavens, gave the signal for retiring each to their habitation. The reverend Sire then withdrew, but not till he had uttered these words:—

"Hearken, ye tender branches, to your parent-stock, bend to the lessons of instruction, and imbibe the maxims of age and experience. As the pismire creeps not to its labour till led by its elders, as the young eagle soars not to the sun, but under the shadow of its mother's wing, so neither doth the child of mortality spring forth to action, unless the parent hand point out its destined labour. Dangerous are the desires of the flesh, and mean the pursuits of the sons of the earth. They stretch out their sinews, like the patient mule; they persevere in their chase after trifles, as the camel in the desert. As the leopard springs on his prey, so doth man rejoice over his riches; and basks in the sun of slothfulness, like the lion's cub. On the stream of life float the bodies of the careless and intemperate, as the carcasses of the dead on the waves of the Tigris. Wish not to enjoy life longer than you wish to do good."

SELECTED.

STRIKING RESEMBLANCES.

Aye, in the catalogue ye go for men,
As hounds and greyhounds, mungrels, spaniels, curs,
Showghes, water-rugs, and demy wolves are classed
All by the name of dogs; the valued file
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The house-keeper, the hunter; every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him closed; whereby he does receive
Particular addition, from the bill
That writes them all alike; and so of men. SHAKSPEARE.

THE perusal of the above lines this morning, threw me into a train of reflections on the resemblance between several

animals of the *human* and the *canine* species; a resemblance, indeed, which appeared to me so strong, that I could not help thinking some of my readers might be amused with my speculations concerning it.

The supple, sinister, smooth-tongued sycophant, in the *suite* of a great man, who is ready to execute his commands, however repugnant they may be to his own inclination, however they may revolt against his ideas of honour—(to say nothing of the shocks which they give his conscience) who is ever disposed

"To fetch and carry nonsense for my lord,"

to say ay, or no, to every thing a great man says—though *ay, and no, too*, are not certainly, as old *Lear* says, *true divinity*—may aptly be coupled in the way of comparison with the *spaniel*, who is distinguished among his canine companions, by fawning upon those that use him worst, and licking even the hand raised in wrath against him; couching at the feet of his imperious master, and becoming more humble the more he is beaten by him.

The sour and severe *critic*, whose supreme delight is to discover errors in a work which has met with a favourable reception from the public, who sits down to examine with all the malice, not of a friend,* but of an enemy—fastens upon the slightest deviations from the rigid rules of composition, with the most execrable satisfaction, and points them out to public view with an exultation which does no credit to his *heart*, whatever compliments he may receive for his critical *acumen*——ranks with the *cur*, who is always snapping and snarling at every man he meets, sticks close to his heels, and annoys those whom he assails in such a manner, that they find it no easy matter to disengage themselves.

The *pimp*, who makes it his lucrative employment to render the life of a man of (modern) honour pleasant by drawing innocent girls from the paths of virtue, and putting them into his honour's power, may be classed with the *pointer*, who watches for that game which his master wants to get into his possession; and as soon as he sees the poor birds endeavouring to make their escape, gives him notice, that some of them at least may be intercepted in their flight.

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* "And read with all the malice of a friend." *Young.*

The *country gentleman*, who lives upon his patrimonial estate in the most prudent style, in a style which enables him at once to make a respectable appearance, and to endear himself to his indigent neighbours, by a well governed hospitality, is (if the comparing him to a dog carries no degradation with it) like one of those faithful domestic animals that guards the house of his protector with the utmost faithfulness, and makes a noble *opposition* to those who attempt, by bribes or blows, to prevent him from doing the duty of a *true mastiff*.

The *delicate dangler* after the *fair*, who spends his whole time in giving himself an effeminate appearance, and in distinguishing himself by feminine employments, whose conversation turns chiefly upon the tattle of the day, and who prefers a *tete-a-tete* with the silliest girl in the nation to the company of any of his own sex, is of no more consequence in the creation than a *lap-dog*.

The *bailiff*, whose *sweet* occupation is to seize those unfortunate members of the community, whom the law has condemned to *durance vile* for the contraction of debts which they cannot discharge, often appears with the fierceness, and acts with the vigour, of a *bull dog*; and as well may the sturdiest of the horned race hope to throw off his ferocious assailant, whom he despises at the same time, as the unhappy debtor shake off a catch-pole, though he may perhaps look at him with the most cordial contempt.

The vigilant *thief-taker*, who peeps into *courts* and *alleys* for those who have endeavoured to screen themselves from the eye of justice, by skulking in corners and obscure places, may with particular propriety, be compared to the *terrier*, as they are both serviceable in bringing to light the vermin by which society is grievously infested.

The *projector*, who is always in pursuit of something which continually eludes his search, may be classed with the *water-spaniel* in chace of a duck, who is perpetually seeing the object of his pursuit sinking from his sight, and tantalizing him by a re-appearance in a different place, to which he hurries, animated with fresh hopes, only to be mortified by a fresh disappointment.

I might increase my catalogue by coupling *soldiers* with *blood-hounds*, *courtiers* with *turn-spits*, and *blunderers in politics* with *blind puppies*, &c. but I imagine I have sufficiently proved, that there is a striking resemblance between the *humane* and the *canine* species; and I believe I may ven-

ture to add, that upon many occasions, the latter, making all due allowances for education, discover more *rationality*, though they cannot *reason*.

FINE SPEAKING.

So prevalent is the custom of *fine speaking*, that *plain speaking* is in danger of being turned out of doors. Seeing a friend muffled up, I asked him if he had the tooth-ache? "Sir, (replied he) I have a tumour in the glands, which suspends the operation of mastication." When I dined with him on a shoulder of mutton, he eat little, observing, "That the *rancidity* of the fat was *not congenial to the coats of the stomach*, and might therefore bring on an *emetic operation*."

A SURPRISE.

At a trial once at Guildhall, between two buckle-makers, on an encroachment made on a patent, Mr. Erskine, as counsel for the plaintiff, displayed much rhetoric on the rapid improvement of the *arts*, and mentioned the invention of his client as entitled to public praise, and of course to the protection of law. In conclusion, looking at his own buckles, which were of a new pattern, he exclaimed with all the *warmth* of a *sincere* advocate, "So elegantly are these ornaments constructed, that were *my* ancestors to rise from their graves, and happen to observe my feet, how would they be surprised!"—"Very true, my learned brother, (cried Mr. Mingay, who was counsel for the defendant) they would be very much surprised, to find you had got either *shoes* or *stockings*!"

SYMPTOMS OF FOLLY.

"How shameful it is that you should fall asleep," said a dull preacher to his drowsy audience, "when that poor idiot (pointing to an idiot, who was leaning on a staff, and staring at him) is both awake and attentive."—"Perhaps, Sir, (replied the fool) *I should have been asleep too, if I had not been an idiot*."

SILENCE!

While Alexander was drawing a plan of one of his warlike operations, Hephestion, one of his generals, came and looking over his shoulder. The king said not a word, but taking off his ring, made the sign of an impression (as of a seal) on the lips of his favourite.

Poetical Department.

ORIGINAL.

STANZAS,

On seeing an Old Oak which had been blasted by Lightning.

LO! in yon mead, an ancient oak forlorn,
Shiver'd with lightning spreads its arms around;
Its strong trunk shatter'd, bark'd, and tempest-torn,
Its large leaves faded, falling to the ground!

With me it sprang, with me to manhood rose,
A child—I careless bent its little head;
A school-boy—robb'd the birds' nests on its boughs;
A man—I shelter'd in its spacious shade.

There, whilst the robin from its branches sang,
I've sat with lovely JULIA by my side,
Talk'd o'er the joys of love's luxurious pang,
And wept and laugh'd at once, and smiled and sigh'd.

Ah! there in youth, at eve from school let loose,
Oft have I met the merry-hearted boys,
And leap'd and wrestled or the foot-race chose,
Whilst the oak woo'd and seem'd to share our joys.

And when the moon rose silent and serene,
And soft-eyed evening dim'd each hill and grove,
Beneath its arms I've laid me on the green,
And watch'd the clouds and stars that roll'd above.

Beneath its arms the flocks once loved to lie,
Return'd from sporting o'er the grassy mead;
There once they found beneath its branches high,
From storms a shelter, from sunshine a shade.

There harvest-reapers, frequent thro' the day,
Sought a cool shade and dried their streaming brows;
Hung up their sickles, laugh'd jocose and gay,
And swell'd with joys the lordling never knows.

The bottle pass'd around the jovial throng;
With rural toasts their rural maids they hail'd;
Joke follow'd joke, and song succeeded song,
Whilst at each verse the laugh more loud prevail'd.

The old apart conversed in graver mood,
Of managing of kingdoms, states or farms;
Told how their wheat, or how NAPOLEAN stood,
Judged feats of sickle or the feats of arms.

When lo! the rosy virgin o'er the field,
Would singing come, to bring them harvest food;
Now double rapture would her presence yield,
And mirth and love inflamed at once their blood.

But ah! no more that oak outspreads a shade,
No more expands its leaves before the spring;
But stands neglected, leafless on the mead,
Not e'en a warbler in its boughs to sing!

Thus man, when fortune smiles on his estate,
Is courted, honour'd, visited by all;
But when he meets the adverse stroke of fate,
His friends neglect—forsake him in his fall.

THE STRANGER.

ORIGINAL.

REFLECTIONS,

On recovering from an Indisposition.

HOW oft the joys of life deceive,
How oft in pain they end;
Each slender purpose mortals weave,
How quickly Heav'n may rend.

And yet the sacred joys of hope,
'Twere madness to forego;
'Tis wisdom too with ill to cope,
Nor basely sink in woe.

I oft repined, repined alas!
To thought severe awake,
O, let the night of error pass,
And reason's morning break.

Joy should be temper'd with the thought,
That soon it hence may speed;
Lest we in folly's toils be caught,
And wantoness succeed.

And in misfortune's low'ring day,
Hope still should give relief;
For clouds, like sunshine, pass away,
And joy replaces grief.

Late sank I on the couch of pain,
And pleasure was no more;
Yet health and gladness raise again—
So, oft they did before.

And such is life—from good to ill,
From pleasure soft to pain,
From joy to grief its changes still,
An endless circling train.

Hence should the soul be firm—'tis great,
Calm thro' each change to toil;
Nor shrink at ev'ry frown of fate,
Nor vaunt at ev'ry smile. GLORMON.

ORIGINAL.

THE PURSUIT OF FAME.

MANKIND with ardour oft pursue
Fame, which still their grasp eludes;
And if attain'd, like morning dew
Transient—and the mind deludes.

Distant far, with specious wiles,
It allures and then ensnares;
Beckons, calls, invites with smiles—
Binds in chains of anxious cares.

Too much do we the phantom prize,
'Tis a shade that flits in air;
Malicious *scandal* swifter flies—
Soon 'tis as it never were.

Yet tho' illusive, frail, and far,
We persist to chase it still,
In the field of arts, or war,
Social group, or where we will.

Ah! 'tis the same where'er we go,
Envy ever hovers near,
And like the croaking black-wing'd crow,
Fills the mind with boding fear. ALICIAN.